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Editor's Mailbox

Dear Sirs

I have been following closely, in a closed mind, the recent events connected with the Appomattox County Public School system. I would like to change my and view the situation with open mind and possibly get a community thinking toward constructive attitude.

We are living today in a world that has come to believe nothing can be solved without protest and/or demonstration. Here in Appomattox we are quick to condemn the school administration and the school board for our existing difficulties. Let us think for a few minutes about what we are saying. We have this administration and school board for quite awhile. I heard no complaints about their decisions in the past, when their decisions were relatively simple and autoustic, but when they became more difficult, the kind that separate the men from the boys, we say that we let us down. Can you honestly say that a decision, made by YOU, would have prevented any or all of the things that have happened?

Supposed to be one who thinks Gordon Bragg has been and still is an asset to this community, I am one of those of us who can remember the days before Gordon came to Appomattox when our only coaches we had were those who volunteered and I firmly believe, received any compensation. We had no athletic program, only a small group of boys who had a strong desire and determination to compete with other area schools. Many other men would have turned down the challenge that was here and sought a position in another school that had an established athletic program. It is my sincere hope that the administration and school board will reconsider and rehire Gordon as head football coach at Appomattox County High School. I can not vision attending a football game without Gordon on the sideline.

However, I am not going to blame the administration or school board. Rather, I am going to blame myself. The competitive spirit in our school and community is second to none. We have come to expect our teams to win in everything they do, and when they lose we claim that we were robbed rather than say we had a bad day. In football, when the team has a record of 9 wins and 1 defeat, the coaches and players are praised and told that they did a good job, but we will win 10 and lose 0 next year.

I was one of many who journeyed to Nelson County for the game last fall. When it seemed to me that the game was out of control, I along with several hundred other keyed up fans, let the officials have a volley of verbal protests, and perhaps a dozen fans went a little further than that. Well, ladies and gentlemen, if my information is correct, this was the beginning of the end of Mr. Bragg's career as head football coach. I sincerely believed that it was my constitutional right to protest, but if I had known the consequences, I would have stayed at home.

And so it is with other problems in the schools. Since my actions and bad judgement have contributed to one unwanted situation, I am not about to claim to know the answer to these problems, but I feel that the grievance committee is a step in the right direction and that given a chance, without interference from those of us who are often mis-informed and not completely informed, the students and their instructors might just prove to everyone that they are not blind, deaf and dumb like the three monkeys, but are responsible people who can solve their own problems.

H. W. Conner,
Appomattox, VA.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It may seem strange for the parent of an only child, that child being a daughter, to feel it necessary to write in support of our football coach, Gordon Bragg, but I do feel that it is necessary that I express my personal opinion.

For years, I have supported Gordon Bragg and his football team by attending both home and away games whenever possible. If I did not support Gordon Bragg as a coach and respect him as a person, I would not have attended these athletic events. No one made me go. True, I am guilty of "yelling at officials at football games and at referees at basketball games," but, in the future, any time that I attend any athletic event, I intend to behave as spectors should behave.

Several years ago, Coach Bragg taught swimming lessons at Holiday Lake in connection with his summer youth program.

When my daughter was only four years old, Coach Bragg agreed to take her into his swimming classes, even though she was the youngest child interested in the classes at that time. Needless to say, I was ready and willing to entrust her to his care, and am happy to state that after just a few lessons she swam to the float at Holiday Lake with no assistance from her instructor other than the fact that she, too, had the greatest of confidence in Coach Bragg. Twice a week I watched Mr. Bragg as he helped all the students in their efforts to learn swimming and was amazed with the results and quite pleased with the manner in which he worked with these young children.

Regardless of any action the school board might take against our great Coach, citizens, students and interested parents will never forget this man and the opinion of hundreds of people will never change.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Lloyd Hudson

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The Pastor Speaks

IS IT RIGHT?

THE TEXT:"Thou shalt do that which is right." Deut. 6:18.

Moses reminded Israel of the commandments of God and of His great mercy and blessings upon them, giving them full instructions as to the things they were to do and warning them of God's wrath if they did not; therefore, the subject:

I. ISIT RIGHT to ignore God's word today? Realizing what it is, what it is doing and what it will do. When we fail to read, meditate and follow its instructions we ignore it. Second, Is it right to live up all of God's sunshine, fresh air, thrills and enjoyment, seed time and harvest, good food and fresh water and not be a Christian? Third, is it right to hear the glorious gospel of Jesus, to be saved, being forgiven of all our trepasses and sins, having our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, coming into an inheritance that is undefiled and fadeth not away, receiving a celestial insurance policy signed in the blood of the Lamb, by the one who has now become the captain of our salvation, enjoying the greatest blessings that are to be found under heaven. Is it right to have all of these things and not be faithful to attend the services of God, tithe our income and give to missions that we may spread the gospel around the world. Let's think it over dear friends, consider the price that was paid for us to be saved and take inventory of our lives. Is it right to do anything different than what the Lord has instructed us to do? Have we done that which the same day that Stephen was martyred. His death was probably the spark that ignited it. Saul and his co-workers seemed to operate on the principle: when in doubt, use violence. The religious authorities did not know what to do with the followers of Jesus. They had tried imprisonment, threats, intimidation – but, none of this had kept the disciples from their witness. Finally, the authorities resorted to violence, just as they had done with Jesus.

The world has not changed much, has it? Many people still seem to operate on that principle: when in doubt, use violence. Most wars begin because men are committed to this idea. Racial and economic strife are other consequences. Yet, again and again, history has demonstrated that violence not only fails to achieve its objectives, but often bring the very opposite result.

What God Can Use

On the day of his Ascension, Jesus had said to his disciples: ". . .you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (1:8). Up to the time of the persecution, however, his followers had stayed in Jerusalem, even after Pentecost. What was it, then, that would move them out into Judea, Samaria, and beyond? The answer: persecution!

The disciples were soon to learn two things from their experience. First, they learned that the will of God cannot be defeated by the violent opposition of men. Persecution would not be able to stop the Church just as it had been unable to stop Jesus. God can use even the evil intentions of men to fulfill his purposes for the Church and the Kingdom.

Secondly, they learned that when they were truly open to God's power and purpose, they also able to carry them further than they otherwise would have been willing to go. Specifically, in this case, it meant carrying the gospel into Samaria, something that was hardly in attractive prospect for Jewish Christians. The reason, of course, was the ancient bitterness between Jews and Samaritans.

The feeling between these two peoples was so intense that Jewish travelers from Galilee made a long detour to avoid passing through Samaria. The original bitterness between them can be traced to actual historical factors, but sheer prejudice kept the wounds from healing.

The Opportunities
In Adversity

The persecution that overtook the church did not seem like a blessing to the early disciples. Yet, in time, they were probably able to look back and realize that God had taken the violence of sinful men and managed to wring a blessing from it. The persecution was a "bad break," but God taught the Church how to make a "bad break" work for the Kingdom instead of against it.

He can teach us that lesson too, if we let him.

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THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

THE "BREAKS"

Lesson for April 26, 1970

Background Scripture: Acts 6; 8 through 8:40; 10:1 through 11:18.
Devotional Reading: Matthew 10; 24-33.

Clem Labine, the great National League baseball pitcher has discovered what can be done with adversity: "I busted my index finger on my right hand trying to catch a pass in a semi-pro football game. I got a bad crook in my finger. I found out afterwards that it helped my curve ball and sinker."

He turned an injury into an asset, something Christians have been doing for over 1,900 years. From the very beginning of the church it has been evident that the important thing is not so much in getting the "breaks of the game," but in making the breaks work for you instead of against you.

This is illustrated for us in Acts 8, the story of the first persecution of the Church. He broke out with great violence is right in the sight of God?

Who'll go and help the Shepherd kind,
Help Him the wondering ones to find?
Who'll bring the lost ones to the fold,
Where they'll be sheltered from the cold?

Earnie W. Lucas:Pastor
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